1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

123 [513] hammock for me. They preferred to lie half buried in the sand, both for warmth and for protection from the mosquitoes.

Some of the bolder young men asked for rum. I had none with me. All along the road I had been told that rum was the only means of inducing the Indians to dance, but an ethnologist's work cannot be based on such an approach.

Through the diplomatic efforts of Maria, the Yaruros consented to sing and dance a little. I was able to arouse their interest in my flashlight, and to arouse their modesty and bewilderment when I flashed it upon them. My compass also drew an excited jabbering circle about me. But I was not able to engage them in conversation, and finally left them about midnight with the satisfaction that at least there had been no friction.

On the following day I sent them a pig, and later in the day again visited them. They were still shy and suspicious of me, but permitted me to go about the camp examining their artifacts.

731 There was not much to be done in this camp. The group was in a wretched state, still in mourning for their dead, living in fear of some fresh calamity, and although they were suffering hunger, too miserable to try to go back to the river where, at least, they would find food. Tribal customs prevented my engaging the old women in conversation and the men were too young and much too affected by llanero culture to tell me about their own people. Their advice, which I took, was to go farther south where we would find other Yaruro bands among whom I could find old men who could answer any questions.

123 I prevailed upon the leader of the band, Estaban, to accompany me. He was reluctant to go, not wanting to be separated from his young wife, and perhaps was afraid to trust himself alone with me. However, his desire for cloth and a mosquito netting was stronger than his fear. Estaban proved a loyal and faithful companion.

[177] We found the next band encamped on a beach by the Capanaparo River. Here they were temporarily in the employ of a llanero engaged in building a house. For several days I had no more success with them than I had had with the other band, so during that time we studied whatever was on the surface. However, I was not doing all the studying. The Yaruros were watching me closely and weighing my statements carefully. During this time Estaban was busy building up my reputation. What impressed them most was that I did not ask for their women, and that all I wanted to do was to talk with them about themselves.

One night their attitude suddenly changed. I had been sitting for hours on the sands in the midst of these people, waiting for them to give me a sign of friendliness, but they were silent and apparently

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songs. His nephew went to stand behind him; his son went forward to stand at the left shoulder of his cousin. These two boys joined in the singing, repeating Landaeta's song stanza after stanza. A few women, led by Landaeta's wife and daughter, went to stand at his right side, and joined the boys in answering the songs of the shaman. They stood there in front of the pole singing until the Southern Cross hung high in the sky. Then Landaeta's wife took a gourd rattle from the basket and gave it to her husband, who immediately began to shake it, its liquid tone blending harmoniously with the voices. The singers became more animated when they heard the rattle, and soon they began to dance, jerking the body forward and backward, rhythmically and in unison. At times Landaeta would shake his rattle violently and his voice would betray his deep excitement. His wife from time to time would give a lighted cigarette to him, holding it to his mouth until it was consumed. At midnight the shaking of the rattle became more frequent and more violent, and finally, in the middle of one song, everyone began to move around the pole. The women put their right hands on the shoulder of the one ahead, and soon were running and stamping the right foot as they did so. The men formed an inner circle, dancing one behind the other. At the end of each song they paused for a moment lined up in their original positions. As the night wore on, both singing and dancing became more and more animated until the shaman appeared to be in a frenzy. His voice rose in pitch, his rhythm was faster, and more strongly accentuated, and all sang with greater feeling. The shaman danced in jerky movements, bending and twisting his body, half spinning about, first one way then the other, until he seemed to be quivering all over. The dance around the pole became almost a mad run, made more difficult by the soft sands and the complex movements of the body. The men would leap high and as the right foot was stamped in unison, a resonant beat was produced that seemed to blend with the pulsating roar of the howlers brought to us by the wind, and marked off by the rich rattling of the gourd and the choral singing. In the morning hours the wind rose again, blew more violently, and the roar of the monkeys became stronger, and the Yaruros sang passionately. It was then, when the morning star was already high, and dawn lighted the eastern horizon. that they stopped.

The sun awoke me, and though I had slept barely two hours I felt quite refreshed. I sat up to look about me. There was the vast stretch of sand, the fringe of jungle, and the sparkling river. My Yaruros were sleeping half buried in the sand, behind basketry to shelter themselves from the wind. The vultures were already at the piles of refuse, feasting on crocodiles and turtles. Soon the sun awoke my friends, and they too sat up to gaze quietly at the western sky where they believe their gods live.

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where they believe their gods live. It was only when the sun began to burn our bodies that they approached me to chat. They expressed their concern over my illness and soon busied themselves to make me as comfortable as possible. While I distributed among them a few presents bought for them in Urbana, and turned all of the food over to Landaeta, the younger men were busy building a sun shelter, an arbor of the sweet-smelling guava bush, though for themselves they had only branches thrust into the sands, giving only a thin shade. From now on, I was completely in their care, and they were careful nurses and tender friends. The best of the hunt was mine, and even the women delighted in taking care of my clothing, and in bringing me delicacies.

They were glad to see me, and the women shamans soon began their chants while the men surrounded me and told me in their own language and in broken Spanish what had occurred the previous night. Men are prohibited from singing during the day, but the women sit in swinging hammocks and chant their songs. I learned, too, that Landaeta's daughter had not died, for there she was, grateful and shyly looking at me, completely well. They attributed her cure to me, though I was not at all responsible for it. During the night, they told me, the gods had come among us, and told them that I, too, was one of Kuma's children, and again they insisted that I was related to them.

I learned that Puaná and Itciai are cocreators with Kuma, the mother goddess, and they are directly responsible for the actual creation of the world. Hatchawa, in the form of a litttle boy, is another god who has given mankind fire, the bow and arrow, and many other blessings. Now, when the shaman sings at night his soul leaves his body and travels to the land of Kuma, leaving his body behind. The gods may come then, enter his body in the form of songs, and transmit their messages to the Yaruros. They had come the night before to greet me and to reassure my friends of my goodness and my own powers of shamanism.

We sat, smoked, and talked all day. In the afternoon we feasted on crocodile, turtle eggs, wild roots, palm nuts, and honey. Finishing our dinner, we sat quietly facing the west, watching the skies. As the sun set low again, rays of gold, blue, and white shot into the sky from the horizon, and my friends rejoiced at this certain greeting of Kuma to us.

Darkness came upon us, and in anticipation of a long night of singing and dancing—I could sing but could not dance, since I could not stand up—I lay on the sands to rest before the beginning of the ceremonies, but the skies interested the Yaruros and they came to tell me what they read there. The brightness of the stars and the changing

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iron hoe, which is also made by the Yaruro out of any heavy scrap of iron that they may gather. Sometimes they will work for the ranchers and with their earnings purchase this type of hoe from a trader. However, such a digging tool is quite a luxury and sharpened sticks are more common.

MORTARS AND PESTLES.—During the rainy season, the Yaruros gather chigua, a seed, which they dry and pound into flour. Mortars of wood shaped as shown in figure 20, *a*, *b*, are used and the pestle is any ordinary hard stick.

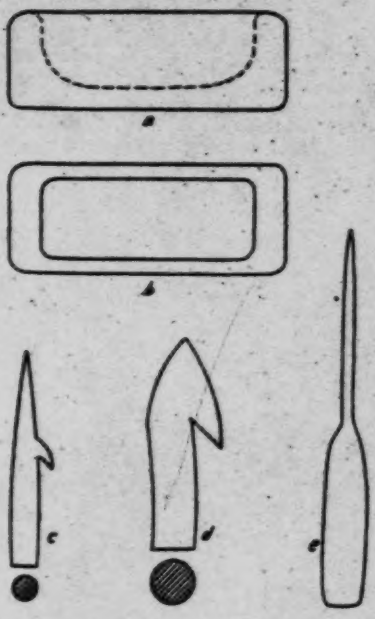

FIGURE 20.—*a*, *b*, Wooden mortar. *c*, Bone or iron point used for hunting chiguire. *d*, Hook used for manatee. *e*, Cooking paddle.

COOKING LADLES.—These are small wooden paddles used in cooking, especially when meat is boiling in a pot (fig. 20, *e*).

HAMMOCKS.—The Yaruros prefer to sleep on the sands, especially during the dry season. The men make hammocks, however, small ones generally used by children as cradles, and by the women shamans when they sing, during the day. During the rainy season they may employ them for sleeping.

The fiber employed to make the hammock string comes from the moriche leaf. The string may be very fine, of course, depending on the interest of the maker. It is made by the men. To weave the hammock a loom is made of two poles thrust into the sand to which are fastened two crosspieces at both the top and bottom. The string is then wound around these crosspieces. The weaver employs a knotter's netting technique. When the entire hammock has been woven the weaving is held in place by another string thrust through one of the woven rows.

ROPE.—The fiber mostly employed by the Yaruros is taken from the leaf of the moriche and the macanilla. The inner cortex of the leaf is stripped off and dried and then is taken apart strand by strand. These long fibers are then moistened and twisted together in two's and three's into a string by rolling them on the thigh with the palm of the hand. A stronger string is made in the same way and used for making hammocks. The bow strings are made from the fiber of the macanilla.

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1. Branches thrust into the sands form Yaruro shelter against sun and wind. All the possessions of this family, with the exception of bow and arrows which the hunter has taken with him, are scattered on the ground. They consist of an iron pot, a piece of cloth, several baskets, a hammock, and a water jar. 2. Yaruros prefer to sleep half buried in the sands, both for warmth and protection from insects. During the day young children are put to sleep in hammocks. 3. During the rainy season, or when a site is occupied for more than several days, the Yaruros may build structures such as the one shown in this picture.

[End Plate 4]